

"As the world hated Christ, so it hates those who bear His image."

~ A.W. Tozer

INDIA: Christian Families Terrorized for Weeks

Source: Morning Star News

Mobs armed with clubs terrorized 16 families from a church in Jharkhand state every night for almost three weeks. Going to each home in the village, the militants threatened to kill the Christian family members unless they returned to the animistic Sarna religion. The oppressors would set out at night when the other families were not available to provide help and support.

According to Pastor Sarabjit Bharati of Kirpa Bhavan Salom Church, two of the families have been intimidated into returning to their ancestral religion. These families were forced to perform re-conversion rituals and agree to pay large fines if they are ever found at Christian meetings in the future or they decide to later profess their faith in Christ. The church members have also faced possible expulsion or boycott.



Sarna worshippers paying homage to the village deity.

After the Christians raised concerns, police visited the village in late April. Yet the trouble continued until the 14 families that refused to convert registered a formal police complaint on May 7th. For further information on the persecution of Christians in India, and to review previously posted reports, go to our [country report](#).

Please lift up these Christian families in your prayers, praying that they will continue standing firm in the midst of this volatile situation. Remember the two families who yielded to the pressure of their oppressors. May they experience God's grace and restoration as they turn wholeheartedly to Him, also receiving His peace and protection in the process. Pray for the ongoing ministry of this church in the village and surrounding areas so that the Lord's transformative work can continue in many lives – touching the hearts of the perpetrators as well.

EGYPT: Approval of Churches Amidst Turmoil

Sources: Egypt Independent, Christian Post, Christian Solidarity Worldwide



Photo: Flickr / Andrew A. Shenouda (cc)

In April, it was reported that 74 applications had been approved, legalizing unlicensed churches across Egypt ([read more](#)). After the government committee met again on May 19th, a further 70 churches have been legalized, bringing the total to 1,638 since the committee was formed in January 2017. This leaves 2,000 further applications remaining for consideration.

Despite the positive action demonstrated by the government, local authorities in some areas continue to create problems. On May 20th, local authorities in Koum Al-Farag demolished a church building in response to sectarian protests. The one-story building had served as a place of worship for 15 years.

A few years ago, local Muslims constructed a mosque next door in an attempt to prevent the church building from being approved under the ongoing legalization process. When the church building

was recently expanded to accommodate a growing congregation, tensions broke out between Christians and Muslims in the area. To prevent further escalation, local authorities demolished both the church building and the mosque. Fourteen Christians were arrested when they attempted to stop the destruction.

In consideration of the action taken, Mervyn Thomas from Christian Solidarity Worldwide described it as "not an effective way of addressing sectarian tensions." He went on to say that "the government must work with local authorities to formulate civic

interventions that address and transform the societal attitudes underpinning sectarian tensions."

First of all, we thank God for the progress demonstrated by the Egyptian government in its endeavours to grant official approval despite the backlog of applications. Pray that the process will continue favourably, and hopefully even be expedited, so churches can receive their long-awaited legal status. Remember the people of Koum Al-Farag, as well as others who are facing sectarian tensions in their communities. May these citizens come to acknowledge that violence will not resolve their differences; for true peace and unity can only be achieved with God's love. Pray that He will give wisdom to the authorities as they work to resolve the issues underlying the tensions.

PRAISE REPORT

AFGHANISTAN: God's Work in the Midst of Suffering

Sources: Mission Network News, VOM Australia

Tremendous challenges are taking place politically in the country of Afghanistan, leading to many daily difficulties for citizens. Compounding this, evangelism is illegal and can bring about serious consequences for Christians. These followers of Christ must contend with additional struggles that are unique to them, including the freedom of being able to worship openly. Despite these difficulties, God's work is continuing throughout the country.

According to an in-country VOM ministry worker, hundreds of small groups are meeting in homes to study the Bible through the use of a storytelling method. Such small groups are particularly effective in reaching women, who are mostly confined to the home. Social media has also proven to be a beneficial outreach tool.



While many Afghans are coming to faith in Christ, the needs remain great. Numerous people groups do not yet have any access to the Scriptures in their own languages, and opposition to Christianity remains strong in these communities. To learn more about the challenges facing believers in Afghanistan, go to our online [country report](#).

Praise the Lord for the wonderful ministry that is taking place throughout Afghanistan, as people come to faith in Jesus Christ and receive His gift of salvation! May this ongoing work continue to grow and flourish, resulting in much fruit and the furtherance of God's Kingdom. Pray that more ministry opportunities will arise, specifically in regards to Bible translation and other forms of evangelistic outreach in areas where the Gospel message is greatly needed. Ask for God's protection and blessing to be upon believers who are willing to share the hope they have in Christ.

If you would like to post a prayer of praise or petition on behalf of our persecuted family around the globe, visit [VOMC's prayer wall](#).

The Persecution & Prayer Alert is a ministry of:
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